

No. XVII.—OCCURRENCE OF THE TREE SNAKE (*DENDROPHIS PICTUS*) IN KUMAON.

When I wrote my popular article on this Snake in this Journal, (Vol. XIX, p. 787, *et seq.*), the only evidence that it occurs in Northern India, West of Bengal was from Stoliczka, who reported it common in Kumaon and Sutlej. Further, out of 704 snakes collected by me in Fyzabad, U. P. no single specimen came to bag.

It is interesting therefore that on my journey from Ranibag to Kathgodam at the foot of the Naini Tal Hills on the 15th of this month I came across a fine ♀ specimen.

It crossed the road holding its head some 9 inches or a foot high, having something in its jaws. Hurriedly dismounting I managed to disable the snake before it gained jungle cover, and was surprised to find it a *Dendrophis pictus*. Its intended victim which was held transversely in the jaws as a dog carries a stick, was dropped on the road, and when picked up proved to be a large gecko (probably *Hemidactylus coactaei*). I identified the snake from its colouration chiefly, from *D. tristis* (*vide* remarks on page 779 of the article above referred to). I did not examine the dentition, nor count the ventrals and subcaudals. The costals were 15 anteriorly and in midbody, 11 posteriorly.

F. WALL, LT.-COL., I.M.S.

JHELUM, 22nd October 1917.

No. XVIII.—PYTHONS BREEDING IN CAPTIVITY.

A female Python (*Python molurus*) measuring 8'-6" had been caged for four years in the vivarium of the Nagpur Museum, and on the 10th October 1916, a male measuring 5'-8" was introduced into the same cage. At first there was a tendency to disagree but after a day or two the pair became friendly and invariably lay coiled together. After the winter fast the dam appeared to be falling off in her appetite and began to refuse food offered to her. In February she ate but one chicken and a rat, in March nothing, in April only one rat, after which she refused food entirely. On 12th May she deposited 16 eggs. Deposition began at about 7 A.M. and ended at 2 P.M. The snake lay coiled during the process and as each egg was laid she proceeded to cover it with her coils.

One egg which was opened contained an embryo in an early stage of development which measured 3 inches when unravelled. The heart was seen pulsating and the hind limbs were indicated by two minute prominences. The weight of this egg was 6½ oz.

On the following day it was noticed that she had completely covered seven eggs under her coils and rejected the rest. This was probably due to her inability to cover more than seven eggs or they may have been put out of place by the movements of the male snake which still remained in the same cage. These eggs measured as follows:—

1. 3.4" × 2.5"
2. 3.8" × 2.4"
3. 3.4" × 2.3"
4. 3.6" × 2.5"
5. 3.7" × 2.5"
6. 3.1" × 2.5"
7. 3.5" × 2.2"
8. 2.2" × 1.8"
9. 2.5" × 1.9"



All contained embryos similar to the one described, except Nos. 6, 8 and 9 which were unfertile, 8 and 9 were discoloured and not fully formed, while 6 was joined to 5.

The snake incubated these eggs till 30th June and throughout the period she was noticed twitching at short intervals. On the 2nd June she left the eggs, had a drink and after immersing herself in the watertank returned to the eggs. On the 16th June she ate a dead rat and a bird placed near her. On the 30th June she left the eggs which were removed and examined. All proved to be addled except one which contained a living snake $14\frac{1}{4}$ " long and about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in thickness. The foetal tooth, which ended in a blunt point was distinctly visible to the naked eye.

The dam had sloughed on the 7th April before the incubation period and did not shed her skin again till the 19th July.

CENTRAL MUSEUM, NAGPUR,
8th August 1917.

E. A. D'ABREU, F.Z.S.

No. XIX.—THE VARIETIES OF COBRAS IN CENTRAL INDIA.

Please see Col. Bannerman's paper on the distribution of varieties of Cobra in Vol. XVI, page 638, and Vol. XVII, page 1031, of our Journal.

Central India is mentioned as the habitat of the variety *cacca*.

On 3rd June a Cobra was brought to me of the ordinary "*typica*" variety with well developed ocellate marks. It was 3'-10" in length.

On the 11th June I was brought a Cobra of the variety "*cacca*" 4'-3" long. I made a careful lepidosis of the snake although I was certain that it could be nothing else. So far as I recollect Goona is the only place given in Col. Bannerman's map, lying in Central India. Here (Manpur) the two varieties occur. It will be interesting to see which prevails when more have been collected.

C. E. LUARD, MAJOR.

THE AGENCY, MANPUR, C. I.,
2nd September 1917.

No. XX.—COBRAS WITHOUT THE CUNEATE SCALE.

I am sending to-day the head of a snake which was killed by a servant in the compound last night. I proceeded to identify it this morning and at once came to the conclusion that it was a Cobra (*Naja tripudians*) on the following points:—

1. 3rd supra-labial touches nasal shield and eye. This separates Cobras and Coral snakes from all other snakes, *vide* Wall's "Poisonous Terrestrial Snakes," page 23.
2. 'The præocular shield touches the internasal', peculiar to the cobras with two rare exceptions (page 28 same book).
3. Other marks as tail, etc., point to the Cobra and scale pattern on back makes distinct chevron shape.

I went over all this most carefully and could not find that I was mistaken in any point *but* I could find no 'cuneate' scale and the scales differ in the two following points. The 2nd temporal does not touch 5th and 6th supralabials but the 4th and 5th, and the 4th supra-labial does not touch the eye as figured in Wall's book, page 29. I have not identified many snakes and most of those of this part of India are new to me, but